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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2495
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0982
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SUBJECT: HAITI ELECTIONS: DATE FOR SECOND ROUND UNDER
DISCUSSION

¶1. (U) The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) is meeting this afternoon, March 3, to discuss when to hold the second round parliamentary elections. Only one seat in the Chamber of Deputies of the total 129 legislative seats contested was won in the February 7 general election. Following the delays in vote tabulation and the civic unrest surrounding the Presidential election, the run-off, originally scheduled to be held March 19, will have to be postponed. CEP Secretary General Rosemond Pradel confirmed to the media that in his opinion it was not possible to hold the second round as scheduled on March 19. Minustah has already been floating April dates for the run-off.

¶2. (SBU) The CEP officially announced the results for the legislative races on February 25. MINUSTAH elections chief confirmed to poloff that the challenge period closed March 2. The claims submitted are under review. Pradel said that at least 24 days are needed between the end of the challenge period for ballot preparation and printing and deployment of electoral supplies. This is consistent with timelines that MINUSTAH officials have put forward previously. Pradel further suggested that a two-week delay holding the elections April 2 with the presidential inauguration in mid-April before a seated National Assembly would not unduly jeopardize the process. In separate meetings, both CEP President Max Mathurin and CEP member Josefa Gauthier told poloff that while the March 19 date was unlikely there was an urgency to holding the second round as soon as feasible.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The PM has told the charge that he was aiming for a March 29 run-off with an inauguration the following week. But with continuing delays, and the recent resignation of CEP Director General Bernard, this too is looking improbable. However, the pressure must continue on the CEP to hold as close as possible to the original calendar and any undue delays are not acceptable. The local Core Group will meet March 6 to agree on the best ways to jump start round two. End Comment.
GRIFFITHS